

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Tymniak Supports Sweeping Ethics Reform Bill



State Rep. Cathy C. Tymniak, R-133rd, Fairfield, Westport, has voted for far-reaching legislation to toughen enforcement of the state's already strong ethics laws on public officials.

The legislation, SB1, replaces the nine member State Ethics Commission with a new procedure of bringing ethical violators before a quasi-judicial hearing where strong penalties would be imposed. The legislature last year voted to increase penalties for ethical violations to as much as \$10,000 and a year in jail.

"Connecticut has seen major scandals at the state and local level," said Rep. Tymniak. "This new legislation, together with tougher penalties enacted last year, should send a clear message that honesty and integrity are expected of all public officials."

"The people of Connecticut have a right to expect that government is conducted with impartiality and integrity," added Rep. Tymniak. "This legislation, together with others recently adopted, should go a long way toward restoring that public confidence in elected and appointed officials."

Rep. Tymniak voted for the legislation in committee earlier this session and expects to vote for it on the floor of the state House of Representatives. The bill passed the state Senate May 26, and if approved by the House goes to Governor M. Jodi Rell to be signed into law.

This bill abolishes the nine-member State Ethics Commission (SEC) and replaces it with a seven-member Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board and Office of State Ethics (OSE). Like the SEC, the new entities administer and enforce the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists.

The OSE performs many duties, including investigating and hearing ethics complaints. The OSE follows similar procedures as the SEC. However under the bill, a judge trial referee, rather than the new office, holds probable cause hearings and determines if probable cause exists to believe that an ethics violation was committed.

The bill requires the chief court administrator to designate and make 10 judge trial referees available to handle a variety of different ethics matters.

Rep. Tymniak serves the 133rd Assembly District of Fairfield and Westport in the state House of Representatives.